





**Alberta  
Cattle  
Commission**

**GRASS**

# ROUTES

*The Alberta cattle producer newsletter.*

## Inside

**2**

- *Ending Energy Surface Leases*

## Insert

- *Special Feature on the First-Ever Environmental Stewardship Award Winner*

**3**

- *Producers and Animal Welfare*

**4**

- *CCA Update*
- *CANFAX Market Summary*

## Did you know?

The ACC is the major industry funder of research projects into cattle and beef production. Just three of 14 current projects (reducing carcass shrink, electronic ID and vascular chilling) show that the beef industry could save as much as \$62.50 per animal.



## Government investigating beef imports

*Study to measure impact on domestic boneless beef production*

The Canadian International Trade Tribunal (CITT) has been directed by the federal ministers of agriculture, finance and international trade to conduct an inquiry to determine if boneless beef imports from Australia and New Zealand are causing or threatening injury to Canadian boneless beef production.

At the beginning of 1993, Australia and New Zealand agreed to voluntarily limit their beef exports to the United States due to the U.S. Meat Import Law which sets specific import volumes that trigger import restrictions. Since that time, shipments to Canada from Australia have increased sharply by approximately 200 per cent compared with this time last year.

The inquiry will not include imports from the United States which are exempted under the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement.

The study will be carried out under Section 20 of the CITT Act which allows the government to direct the CITT to inquire and report on any matter in relation to the importation of goods into Canada that may cause or threaten injury to, or retard the establishment of, the production of goods in Canada.

If the CITT finds imports are causing or threatening to cause serious injury to the Canadian industry, the government could impose annual global quotas on imports of boneless beef.

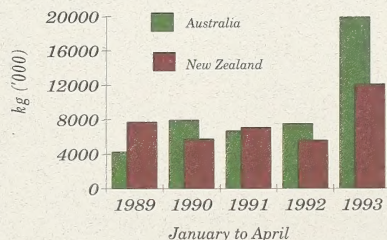
The Canadian beef cattle industry has called for a review of Canada's beef import policies ever since

the implementation of the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement. The lack of harmonization between the U.S. Meat Import Law and the Canadian Meat Import Act could lead to Canada becoming a backdoor route for imported beef to the U.S. market through displacement of Canadian product whenever the U.S. law is triggered. This disruption of normal trade patterns jeopardizes Canada's trading relationship with the United States.

In March, the Alberta Cattle Commission (ACC) made a presentation to the Alberta Conservative Caucus and members of Parliament on several issues including the high level of Australian boneless beef imports and changes to the Meat Import Act. The ACC expressed support for MP Ken Hughes' private members bill, that if passed, would address the industry's concerns about the Meat Import Act.

The Canadian Cattlemen's Association retained counsel and made a submission to the CITT on behalf of the beef cattle industry earlier this month.

### Australian & New Zealand Beef Imports



**Strength from the ground up.**

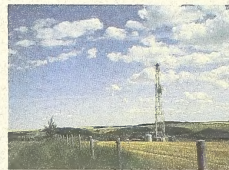


## Educating K-Country visitors

The Alberta Cattle Commission in cooperation with the Alberta Forest Service, Public Lands and Kananaskis Country is developing an interpretive display to explain the benefits of cattle grazing in the Bow Crow forest. Some park users have complained about the presence of cattle on roadways and in camping areas. The display will explain the importance and history of grazing in the area and is scheduled for completion in September.

## You're invited to the ACC semi annual meeting

The Alberta Cattle Commission (ACC) is holding its semi annual meeting in Red Deer, June 23-24. The meeting will be held in conjunction with the Alberta Beef Congress. All cattle producers are invited to attend. For more information call the ACC office, 275-4400.



# Advice on ending energy surface leases

The Office of the Farmers' Advocate of Alberta has the following advice for producers with surface leases on their property.

There are currently over 30,000 suspended wells in Alberta. For an oil company to close a well site, it must remove all equipment and restore the land to a condition equal to what it was prior to the well being drilled. A company can then apply to the Department of Environmental Protection, Land Conservation and Reclamation Council, for a government reclamation certificate. This certificate enables a company to terminate the surface lease and stop payment of annual compensation to the landowner. The time between the restoration of the land and the granting of a reclamation certificate can range from one to three years.

Some oil companies will approach a landowner with a release to bring a surface lease to an end. If the landowner is satisfied that the land is restored and signs the release, the oil company can stop paying compensation in that year. When a release is signed, a company must still obtain a reclamation certificate from the government. The release enables the company to end compensation during the period required for the government to inspect the well site and issue a reclamation certificate.

Another option is an amending agreement to the surface lease. The company would approach the landowner once the land had been restored. If the landowner was satisfied that the site had been reclaimed, they would sign an agreement amending the terms of the surface lease.

Under the amending agreement, the company would agree to enter the land only for the purpose of doing reclamation work and to pay compensation for any damages. The landowner would agree to a reduction in compensation to reflect the fact that most of the nuisance, inconvenience, and adverse effect from the well site had been removed. The landowner would still continue to receive a reduced amount of annual compensation until the government inspects the site and issues a reclamation certificate. The reduced annual payment would compensate the landowner for any loss of use and for time

involved in dealing with the company and the government inspectors.

If a landowner is satisfied the company has properly restored the well site, it is in the landowner's interest to sign the amending agreement over a release. A release takes all rights away from the landowner and leaves them vulnerable; an amending agreement limits a company's entry on to the land and protects the right to compensation under the Surface Rights Act.

The Office of the Farmers' Advocate of Alberta supports the use of an amending agreement when the landowner is satisfied that the company has restored the land and after the company has applied for a reclamation certificate. It is not, however, recommended that the surface lease be amended while the well site is still in active use.

## Provincial retail program

Local cattle producers are the driving force behind a new retail campaign to promote beef in Alberta supermarkets.

Alberta Cattle Commission delegates from across the province are offering selected supermarkets special point of purchase materials to help promote beef at the local level. Producers are working directly with meat managers to supply materials and record response to the program.

Participating stores are receiving recipe brochures, display baskets, rail strips, recipe labels for meat packaging, product information and meat cut charts all specifically developed for the retail market.

The program is similar to a national retail program developed by the Beef Information Centre which only targets supermarkets in large urban centers.

Approximately 140 stores will participate in the pilot project. The program may be expanded depending on retailer and consumer response. Look for the program at one of your local stores.



The Alberta Cattle Commission

*Environmental  
Stewardship  
Award*







# Environmental Stewardship Responsibility in action

It's more than a little amusing to Francis Gardner that until recently the Canadian Soil Survey, a key reference of Canadian agriculture, listed native rangeland as "other unimproved areas".

"The truth is quite the opposite," says Francis. "We take the point of view that native rangelands aren't 'unimproved', they're 'unimprovable'. They're long lived and self-sustaining."

Francis with his wife Bonnie and their family run Mt. Sentinel Ranch, a 600 head commercial cattle operation on 3,400 deeded and 4,800 leased acres in the beautiful foothills west of Nanton, Alberta. For their belief in managing a fragile ecosystem and their commitment to telling the importance of that to the public, they received the Alberta Cattle Commission's first **Environmental Stewardship Award**.

## Care for major resources

Francis' environmental stewardship efforts were made a lot easier by the fact his grandfather W. C. Gardner, who bought the Mt. Sentinel Ranch in 1898, and his father Richard Gardner, who took it over in the 1930s, left it in relatively good condition.

"I've taken the view that what we have with the native grass ecosystem on this ranch is essentially a heritage site," he says. That view was honed with a degree in agriculture and experience

at Agriculture Canada's Lethbridge Research Station.

When he returned to the ranch, Francis took inventory. The land was in generally good shape. But while it had not been badly abused, it had not been rotationally grazed. He set up a rotational system that ensured grazing would

be distributed more evenly over the entire land base so no one area would be overgrazed. Rotational grazing systems also manage sensitive riparian zones for sustained use by cattle and wildlife.

"Improving grass was a cornerstone of our

program," he says.

## Telling the world

Many producers do an excellent job of managing grass. What makes Francis different is how passionately he feels about telling the story of environmental stewardship. He speaks frequently and has been a guest on a special television program for children with David Suzuki. He has worked with the Calgary Zoo, the World Wildlife Fund, and many government agencies. He likes to tell his industry the importance of telling their story to the world.

Francis has used the interest the general public has in the environment to advantage.

"You can't tell people anything unless they're willing to listen," he says. "Today people are willing to listen. They know there is some kind of limit on what the world can take."

"I try and see if they're really interested in learning something. Then I try and talk to them on a basis that appeals to them. I ask them about things they know, ask them about ecosystems they know. It might be a backyard in Calgary."

Don't expect them to understand anything about ranching, native grass ecosystems or anything like that, says Francis. But they understand what he calls the rules of the world. "We all need to live and breathe."

## Share the resource

One thing that makes the Gardners stand out is their strong sense of sharing the resource they have with others. Francis calls himself incredibly lucky.

"We have ecosystems in place that I value highly. We still see elk and grizzly bears, and mule deer."

Not only do they share that with their family,



*Francis and Bonnie Gardner don't just believe in stewardship. They live it every day.*



they believe a bit of that heritage belongs to everyone. The special relationship they've developed with hunters is an example of that.

"We keep the valley around the buildings closed down, but the rest of the ranch is open to hunters and others. They sign a slip so we can keep track of the number of people who come and go, but we don't try and encourage or restrict the number of people who come and go. They sort of regulate themselves.

"There is real respect with these people and we have a great time with them," says Francis. "We have had very few problems using this approach."

### **Innovative management**

Francis believes all this is threatened somewhat unless these resources are managed on an industry scale into the future.

"I know that this ecosystem on my ranch has been around since the last ice age. I know it's sustainable, and that for the past 100 years we've been integrating cattle without damaging it, without degrading it.

"I've begun to realize that we have a very unique part of the world. Darned few things that people do don't impact the ecosystems in a negative way. David Suzuki said this native ecosystem was the first one he had ever seen that wasn't destroyed by the intervention of people."

But Francis believes changes are necessary in how the resource is managed. "We can easily predict the future if we don't change. It's pretty easy to see what's going to happen.

"We need to develop a land management system that takes into account bio-regional considerations.

"We need to look at the methods and the ideas we use to measure our progress. Producers need to be aware of what's there and have to take a stand to protect the land. Governments can't do it, we can see that. Private people, who are multigenerational stewards, who care enough to keep it going are the ones we have to encourage.

"Winning the Environmental Stewardship Award doesn't really change our family in terms of lifestyle.

We just go along doing what we've always done. The real impact comes from how I meet other people, how I see them and how people look at me.

"Up until now, we've been perceived by the rest of society as the big bad

cattle barons who are using resources - exploiting the situation. It's high time the real story was told."

## **Industry leadership begins at the grassroots level**

As the major cattle producer organization in Alberta, the Alberta Cattle Commission (ACC) was built to take strong action on industry issues.

The ACC has taken action to enhance the industry's image on critical issues such as the environment and animal welfare.

In each of these cases, the ACC believes the greatest strength of action comes when producers serve as industry ambassadors and leaders. That is real "strength from the ground up".

The ACC takes seriously the concern of the general public for environmental issues. In fact the ACC believes that the beef industry has a tremendous story to tell the general public.

As a result, the ACC has introduced some innovative environmental programs that strengthen the image of cattle producers as managers and stewards of the land.

### **The Environmental Stewardship Award**

The ACC saw the need to publicly recognize cattle producers who are doing an excellent job of protecting and enhancing the environment. Entrants are judged according to stewardship accomplishments in energy, water systems, air quality, vegetation, soil quality and wildlife management. They are also judged according to leadership activities in the community related to stewardship.

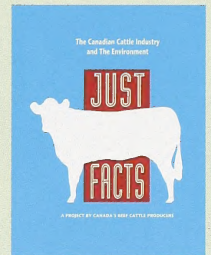
Judges are drawn from a wide range of sources knowledgeable in

resource management. The result is a truly outstanding program which winners and their industry can be proud of.

### **Other environmental efforts**

The Environmental Stewardship Award is one component of the ACC's overall environmental program. Some other efforts include:

- an *Environmental Risk Assessment* of the Alberta beef cattle industry,
- *Just Facts*, a simple, handy reference guide for producers, media, government and other influencers to use when addressing commonly asked questions and comments about the beef industry, and
- media tours, arranging tours for urban media of cattle operations to improve their knowledge of cattle production and agriculture in general.



### **Strength from the ground up**

These efforts show cattle producers in a leadership role and provide balanced information for producers when dealing with the public. It is essential these environmental programs be continued as part of the overall effort to strengthen the Alberta beef industry for the future.



# *The 1993 Environmental Stewardship Award*

## *Enter This Year's Competition and Win Two Ways*

You'll be a major winner two ways if you enter the Alberta Cattle Commission's (ACC) 1993 Environmental Stewardship Award competition.

The winner will receive a commemorative gate sign and an all expenses paid trip for two from anywhere in Alberta to the 1993 ACC Annual General Meeting at the Westin Hotel, Edmonton.

Even more importantly, it means a positive message about the beef industry for the general public.

This year's award, the second annual such effort, recognizes cattle

producers whose natural resource stewardship practices enhance the environment and improve wildlife habitat.

The competition is open to all Alberta cattle producers. Nomination forms are available from the Alberta Cattle Commission office or from zone directors. All cattle producers are encouraged to either enter or nominate another producer who they think may qualify.

Two independent letters of recommendation are required with one coming from an agricultural profes-

sional. Deadline for nominations is July 1, 1993 and the winner will be announced at the 1993 ACC Annual General Meeting, December 6 - 8, 1993.

Take this opportunity to share your environmental practices with other producers and to present the positive story about cattle producers' contribution to the environment.

Send nominations to The Alberta Cattle Commission Environmental Stewardship Award 216, 6715 - 8 Street N.E. Calgary, Alberta T2E 7H7 Phone: 275-4400, Fax: 274-0007.



**Strength from the ground up.**





## Producers proactive on animal welfare

The Alberta Cattle Commission (ACC) has been active on the animal welfare scene promoting cattle producers as good stewards of their beef animals.

Early last year, the ACC mailed the beef cattle Code of Practice to over 40,000 cattle producers in the province. The Code of Practice was developed by animal welfare experts from the Canadian Cattlemen's Association, Agriculture Canada and the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies. The ACC has also offered free copies of the Code of Practice to 4-H beef clubs. The code provides producers with basic principles for minimizing physical and behavioral stress while ensuring that the production potential of each animal is realized.

## Teens enjoy beef class

An innovative program called *Beef in the Classroom* designed to teach high school food science students about beef is well underway. Nearly 50 classes and 1,000 students will receive the presentation.

Joan MacFarlane, a home economist, is reviewing the nutritional benefits of beef, discussing the various cuts of meat, highlighting different cooking methods and concluding the class by preparing a demonstration dish.

MacFarlane says, "Students are really interested in learning more about beef. The cooking demonstrations help them see just how many easy and flexible ways there are to prepare beef."

Students are encouraged to ask questions throughout the presentation. A wide variety of recipe and nutritional brochures are left behind for future reference.

The *Beef in the Classroom* program is a pilot project being tested in 21 Calgary and area schools. The program may be expanded to other Alberta centers in the future. *Beef in the Classroom* is an initiative by the Alberta Cattle Commission promotion program.

(outside right photo - MacFarlane, centre-right with the blue apron, poses with food science 10 students from William Aberhart High School in Calgary)

The ACC is a member of the newly formed Alberta Foundation for Animal Care (AFAC). AFAC is committed to fostering an understanding of the humane care and responsible use of animals recognizing that animals have multiple roles such as: food, fiber, by-products, research, work, recreation and companionship. The goals of the organization are:

- Encourage producer groups to develop, adopt and promote their codes of practice.
- Engaging in education and information programs relating to animal care for producers, media, the general public and through the educational system.
- Monitoring and participating in issues and legislation that affect animal care.
- Developing, collecting and distributing pertinent and credible information and materials relating to animal care.
- Encouraging relevant research to animal care.

The ACC is also organizing media tours to cattle operations in the Calgary area. Media will have a chance to see firsthand the everyday operation of a beef cattle operation. The tour will provide the background information media need to accurately report on the cattle industry.

## World Conference on Animal Production

*Producers are invited to attend the World Conference on Animal Production June 28 - July 2, 1993 at the Edmonton Convention Centre. The conference is co-hosted by the University of Alberta and the Canadian Society of Animal Science.*

*The conference features a trade show and a week of exciting and challenging sessions on all aspects of animal production. For more information contact: WCAP*

*310 AgFor Centre,  
University of Alberta  
Edmonton, Alberta  
T6G 2P5*

*Phone: 492-3232*

*Fax: 492-9130*

## Special belt buckle offer!

*We couldn't believe the response to our last belt buckle offer. Over 200 buckles were sold. The promotion was so popular that we've decided to offer it again. This distinctive buckle is made from bronze and nickel. Order yours for only \$90 which includes GST, shipping and handling.*

*Make cheques payable to:*

*Alberta Cattle Commission*

*Belt Buckle*

*216, 6715 - 8 Street N.E.*

*Calgary, Alberta*

*T2E 7H7*







## Four Country Conference

The Canadian Cattlemen's Association (CCA) met with American, Australian, New Zealand, and Mexican beef representatives in Australia last month to discuss foreign trade issues.

The CCA emphasized that Canadian producers are very concerned about the recent surge in Australian and New Zealand imports. Following unsuccessful efforts to obtain voluntary restraint concessions, the CCA announced that it is asking the federal government to invoke Canada's Meat Import Act.

Achieving agricultural agreements at the current GATT talks was the meeting's priority issue.

Mexico was unanimously invited to join the group which will now be referred to as the Five Nations Beef Conference. Producer representatives have met at the beef conference for the past 11 years to discuss foreign trade issues. The group represents the largest beef production and export bloc in the world.

## Animal Health

Canadian Bluetongue regulations on cattle entering Canada from the United States, and U.S. calfhood vaccination requirements for Brucellosis are in place to address animal health concerns.

Currently, Canada is Brucellosis free and has moved away from vaccination. As well, Canada's climate serves as an effective control against Bluetongue.

Both issues are considered trade irritants. The CCA is encouraging Agriculture Canada to eliminate Bluetongue testing requirements on cattle entering Canada from the United States. At the same time, the CCA will continue to seek reductions to U.S. state Brucellosis regulations.

The CCA and U.S. National Cattlemen's Association are establishing a cross border animal health working group to address these and other animal health issues. The group will suggest to government changes that are acceptable to producers on both sides of the border. Agriculture Canada and the United States Department of Agriculture will also participate.

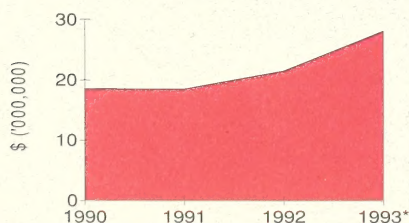
## Canadian Beef Improvement

*Development of an industry driven organization to provide national leadership for beef cattle genetic improvement is underway. Canadian Beef Improvement (CBI) is targeted for operation in January 1994. The CCA, the Canadian Beef Breeds Council and the federal and provincial governments are all partners in CBI.*

## Market Watch by:



### Canadian Beef Exports to Japan



\* projected

## MONTHLY AVERAGES FOR ALBERTA

	April average	March average	change	April 92 average	change
FED STEERS	96.42	97.52	-1.10	82.45	13.97
FED HEIFERS	94.22	94.84	-0.62	80.72	13.50
FEEDER STEERS					
300 - 400	132.96	133.81	-0.85	113.97	18.99
400 - 500	127.54	126.88	0.66	109.13	18.41
500 - 600	122.79	122.62	0.17	105.05	17.74
600 - 700	115.54	114.60	0.94	99.28	16.26
700 - 800	107.65	107.13	0.52	92.80	14.85
800 - 900	100.43	101.06	-0.63	86.68	13.75
900 +	94.94	94.91	0.03	82.55	12.39
FEEDER HEIFERS					
300 - 400	121.96	121.58	0.38	104.89	17.07
400 - 500	116.08	117.40	-1.32	102.00	14.08
500 - 600	111.38	112.48	-1.11	97.48	13.89
600 - 700	106.14	106.80	-0.66	92.03	14.11
700 - 800	101.93	101.83	0.09	87.88	14.04
800 +	95.28	95.40	-0.12	82.81	12.47

CANFAX is a non profit market information service that offers its members detailed weekly and monthly market reports and a member-only hotline to get up to the minute information. For more information call Anne or Keith at 275-5110.

## ACC Market Information Service

Slaughter Cattle Information 274-4340  
Feeder Cattle Information 274-4345

The Alberta Cattle Commission 216, 6715 - 8th St. N.E. Calgary, AB T2E 7H7 275-4400 Mail Registration Number 116432